



**Minutes of the Meeting of the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts
BOARD OF TRUSTEES STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
Thursday, April 27, 2017
87 Blackinton Street**

Members in attendance

Buffy Lord, Chair

Brianne O'Rourke, Student Trustee

Others in attendance

Susan Gold, Board Chair

Dr. James Birge, President

Cathy Holbrook, Vice President of Student Affairs

Cindy Brown, Vice President of Academic Affairs

Celia Norcross, Asst. Dean of Student Development and Engagement

Milena Casamassima, student

Ginger Menard, Clerk

Trustee Lord called the meeting to order at 9:29 a.m.

Haiti Spring Break Service Trip

Senior Milena Casamassima shared her recent experience on a service learning trip to Haiti over spring break. She traveled with students and 1 faculty member to a village in Haiti where they built school benches and raised garden beds. The focus of this service trip was to assess the needs of the community and then assist them with projects that will continue to be of future use to them. Milena offered that this assessment and learning was critical before providing any service as many groups simply show up and project their own ideas of what is needed onto the village. This trip provided her with a broader world view and gave her an opportunity to draw on all that had learned while at MCLA. She offered that this was a life changing experience and she encourages all students to participate in this program, or a similar program, if at all possible.

Orientation & FYE Programming

Celia Norcross discussed the goals of Orientation and the First Year Experience (FYE) programming which includes First Days and First Year seminar. She likened these to Milena's story of Haiti and sustainable development as these programs are focused on providing students the tools they will need to develop their identities and succeed in college.

She provided a brief overview of these programs. Orientation provides a glimpse into the MCLA community and offers opportunities to connect with other students as well as campus resources. First Days programming is purposely a bit more challenging and includes 3 full days of activities to prepare students for the schedules they will have in the upcoming semester. First Year seminars are comprised of 14 weekly conversational gatherings that offer students continued opportunities to connect with one another and discuss a variety of topics from alcohol and drug education to Title IV training and conflict resolution. FYE also includes a strong diversity, equity, and inclusion component.

New this semester is the addition of common time twice a week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, throughout the 14-week program. This will allow for all freshmen to participate at the same time in discussions and seminars.

Orientation this summer will focus more addressing parents and students as separate groups to allow each of them the time to gather information and ask questions. The skits program will also be enhanced due to the continued positive feedback it has received and include more diversity and inclusion as well as academic topics.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion — Dr. William Lewis' visit

Cathy Holbrook and Cindy Brown shared that Dr. Lewis visited campus at the end of March to meet with various campus groups. His focus was to assess and assist with the framework as we prepare to move forward with the hiring of a Chief Diversity Officer. Dr. Lewis submitted a final report which will be shared with the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force and work will begin this summer on creating a scope of responsibilities for the CDO position.

The DEI Task Force meets on a monthly basis and has been charged with specific responsibilities. They have established working groups within the task force to advance their work around specifically identified areas such as recruitment, programming, and policy review.

The next step is to establish a communication plan to report on this work to the campus community.

President Birge noted that another important step is bringing Chief Wynn from Pittsfield to provide additional diversity, equity and inclusion training for MCLA's public safety officers.

Smoke-free MCLA 2018 update

Two co-chairs have been identified to advance "Smoke Free MCLA 2018"— Brian Gallagher from Student Affairs, and Chris Hays from Human Resources. These are two Important areas to involve as this is a student affairs and workforce issue. They will work this summer to develop a timeline, process, and structure for this transition and will bring proposals regarding implementation and enforcement to campus governance. It is important that Admissions is kept up-to-date as they work to recruit the class that will enter in the fall of 2018. The College has applied for a grant from the American Cancer Society that will fund additional resources to help with smoking cessation.

Brianne O'Rourke shared that this issue was discussed at SGA and the students asked about vaping. This is an issue that will have to be included in the planning.

End of Year Updates

Trustee Lord requested an update on the SGA election process and the issue with certain candidates being disqualified. VP Holbrook shared that the students have put forth an amendment to the SGA bylaws to lower the GPA requirement but this will not go into effect until next year.

Trustee Lord thanked Brianne O'Rourke for her incredible work this year as a student trustee.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 10:50 a.m.